



View from the

Blackdown Hills

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Issue No 104 August 2013

Blackdown Hills Annual Review 2012-13 - pages 8 & 9

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Concern that village may lose pub for good

After closure of shop and post office, pub loss would be a major blow



CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE: The King's Arms in Stockland

by Anders Larsson

CONCERN is growing that Stockland will lose its pub for good.

The King's Arms is currently closed and although the building's owner (Horatio Properties Guernsey Ltd) has presented a combined residential/pub proposal, many locals are not convinced.

About 100 villagers attended a meeting on Wednesday, July 17th where the owner outlined a plan understood to involve housing on the site. The pub would be re-

tained minus the dining room, skittle alley and garden, with only seven parking spaces allocated for customers.

Speaking strictly as a concerned resident, Cathy Gardner expressed doubt, saying: "If it is so small I doubt it can make any money, it would not be viable."

"You need the size and car parking."

Another concerned resident, who did not wish to be named, said: "We are investigating what we can do before a planning

application is submitted.

"I think there can be quite a strong lobby put up against the application when it is submitted."

Stockland Parish Council has already applied for the building to be listed as an Asset of Community Value under the

The Community Right to Bid (part of The Localism Act).

The legislation empowers local communities to request that local assets (land or buildings) are listed as Assets of Com-

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Going to amazing heights to celebrate being 75!

A HEMYOCK man is going to dizzying heights to celebrate his 75th birthday - by jumping out of a plane.

Brian Standring, from Pencross View, decided on him to jump out of plane while watching skydivers at Dunkeswell Airfield.

He said: "I want to make sure that I didn't let my birthday slip by without celebrating the day in a special way. A bigger cake with one additional candle doesn't really appeal. I was thinking more along the lines of doing something special, something I haven't done before."

As well as celebrating his birthday in a special way, Mr Standring also saw completing a skydive as an opportunity to raise money for a number of local groups.

By completing the 15,000ft jump, Mr Standring hopes to raise money for Hemyock Pre School, Hemyock Scouts and both the Hemyock Baptist Church and St Mary's Church.

A spokesperson for Hemyock Pre School said: "We rely heavily on our fundraising activities to provide new resources for the children, that will promote and



■ **BRIAN STANDRING** from Hemyock who plans to complete a skydive to celebrate his 75th birthday and raise money for charity

encourage their learning and development. We are therefore very grateful for any funds and donations that we receive, so that we may continue to provide a service, which will be beneficial to the children of the local community, helping them to move forward with their learning and development."

Hemyock Scouts will be using their share of the money raised by

Mr Standring to help send a group of scouts to Denmark.

Mr Standring would like to thank everybody who has supported him so far in his challenge including local businesses the Catherine Wheel, SPAR, Images, Dobles Garage, Post Office, and SPS Hair Design.

Mr Standring will complete his skydive at Dunkeswell Airfield on August 31st.

NEWS briefs

Coronation concert

THE HMS Heron RN Volunteer Band will perform a concert in Dunkeswell next month to celebrate the Queen's Coronation.

The concert will take place at Old Wolford Farm, Dunkeswell, on Sunday, September 1st at 7.30pm.

All proceeds raised from the concert, which is being held to celebrate the 60th year of Queen Elizabeth II's reign, will go to Dunkeswell Mission Community, which comprises of Dunkeswell, Broadhembury, Luppitt, Sheldon and Upottery churches.

Booking in advance is essential and tickets cost £10.

For tickets and further details contact the Mission Community Administrator, Karen Davies, on 01404 890121 or email kite10@sky.com.

Beer and music

THE Blackdown Beer & Music Festival takes place near Churchinford on Friday August 9th from 6pm until 12.30 and Saturday 10th from 1pm until midnight.

Well known for a wide selection of ales, and great atmosphere it promises to be a great weekend.

Bands performing include Area 52, The Darlings and Tiny Face Experience.

There will also be family entertainment on Saturday afternoon, free to younger festival goers including dunk tank, bungee run, face painting, welly wanging, gladiator jousting and more.

On Saturday at 6pm will be the Indalo bucking bronco challenge. Can you handle the bull? Tickets: Friday £10, Saturday £12, camping available. Check online www.blackdownbeer-festival.co.uk

Christian fun day

A FUN day for Christians in the Blackdown Hills will be opened by local MP, Neil Parish.

The third annual fun day will take place at Taormina, Kerswell, Culloompton from 12.30pm on Saturday, August 10th. Neil Parish will officially open the event at 1.15pm.

Events on the day include clown Roly Bain who combines being a professional clown with being an Anglican priest with a worldwide ministry. His presentation is rooted in the Gospel. There will also be a puppet theatre, stalls, skittles, games and refreshments.

For more information contact The Reverend Rik Peckham on 01404 891243.

Dressage and barbecue

by Kate Williams

RELAXED and successful was the description by members and supporters who turned out for Lamberts Castle Riding Club's dressage and barbecue in East Devon last week, despite the heat.

Luckily, the hot weather cooled in time for the 5pm start, allowing riders and horses to compete comfortably at the Dalwood event.

The first of the three tests, Intro B, saw Christine Hill take top spot with Vicky Hammond coming in second. Chloe Day and Rebecca Harding took third and fourth, respectively.

Georgina Ewell came first and second on two rides in the Prelim 4 test, followed by

Rosie Wharton, Alice Wyatt, Christine Hill and Pippa Wyatt.

On top form that evening, Georgina also took first and second place in the Prelim 14. She was followed on the leader board by Rosie Wharton, Alice Wyatt, Pippa Wyatt and Steph Bere.

The club would like to thank committee member Fiona Benger and her husband, Tony, for their hospitality at White Lodge for the dressage event after which a delicious barbecue was enjoyed by riders, families and friends.



■ **ALICE WYATT** was placed fourth in Prelim 4 and Prelim



■ **CLUB CHAIRMAN**
Jane Rogers



View from the Blackdown Hills

is a community newspaper and welcomes contributions of news and photos from individuals, schools, organisations and businesses within the Blackdown Hills.

Please email your contributions to lisa@pemedi.co.uk jackie@pemedi.co.uk or blackdown@tindlenews.co.uk

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Summer holiday fun thanks to lottery grant

YOUNG families in the Blackdown Hills can take part in fun learning activities this summer, thanks to funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund & Sustainable Development Fund grants. The Carousel Project was established to receive a Heritage Lottery Fund Sharing Heritage grant of £3,400 to match funding from the Sustainable Development Fund of £2,860.

Their exciting project, Local Stories, will run this August in the East Devon villages of Dunkeswell, Stockland and Kilmington. Working with heritage specialists and early years educators The Carousel Project be conjuring up fun learning activities to help families and

their children discover more about the Blackdown Hills landscape and unique local heritage.

The Carousel Project is an Exeter-based social enterprise bringing creative learning, new experiences and outdoor adventure to early years children and their families. This project 'Local Stories', running in partnership with the Blackdown Hills AONB and the Axe Valley & Honiton Children's Centre will take families on a time travelling adventure to experience local heritage old and new. Families and their young children can have a go at animation, try making clay pots, explore ancient iron working through storytelling, artwork

and chocolate (really!), make ration books in Dunkeswell, fiddle to Fred Pigeon tunes in Stockland and create a wishing well in Kilmington.

There will be a trip to explore ancient Dumpdon Hillfort with Celtic cake and Iron Age games and a celebration event at the beautifully located Otter Valley Golf where Roman soldiers will be running activities! The project is aimed at families with two-five year olds (but older/younger children welcome). Commenting on the awards, Marie Leverett, Project Manager at The Carousel Project said: "We're delighted to receive funding for this project and can't wait to get started. Families we

have spoken to are keen to find out more about their local heritage and we'll be coming up with some really fun activities to help them find out more."

Activities are free and will run Tuesday 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th August in Stockland Village Hall (10-12), Wednesdays 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th August in Kilmington Cricket Club (10-12) and Thursdays 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th August in Dunkeswell Social Club (2-4pm). Families from neighbouring villages very welcome. For more info see www.thecarouselproject.org.uk/local-stories.

Fabulous flowers

A FESTIVAL of flowers in Dalwood, near Axminster, has raised more than £2,000 for the village church.

The festival, entitled "Let's Dance", was held during a weekend at St Peter's Church.

The theme caught the imagination of villagers, with displays including a maypole, country dancing, ballet, a masquerade ball and Bollywood, all depicted in flowers.

Other dances depicted included disco, flamenco, tango, Scottish dancing, Riverdance, Yorkshire clog dancing, the Lambeth Walk and a Hoedown.

Organisers said it was a splendid weekend and thanks went to flower arrangers from Kilmington, Shute, Stockland and Yarcombe, and to all the Dalwood groups who took part.

Garden party funds for air ambulance



■ ANYONE FOR CAKE: Madeleine Vowles, Alison Jeffrey and Sharon Criddle

A PRIVATE garden in Buckland St Mary played host to a party in aid of Dorset and Somerset Air Ambulance.

Madeleine and Graham Vowles opened up their beautifully maintained hilltop garden, to support their friend Alison Jeffery, whose wanted to raise funds for the air ambulance service.

Alison's husband, farm worker Ian Jeffery, was grateful to Dorset and Somerset Air ambulance for flying him to hospital when he was accidentally crushed by a forage harvesting machine whilst working out in a field near Puckington in October 2012.

Alison explained: "Fortunately the air ambulance was on the scene very quickly and Ian was taken to Musgrove Park

Hospital within seven minutes of taking off, which undoubtedly made the difference between life and death.

"He had suffered a broken shoulder, punctured lung and five broken ribs, so it would have been very difficult to make such a journey overland. The air ambulance responded so quickly and was the first on the scene and treated him on site.

"We are just so grateful to the air ambulance for being there so fast and being able to get to a rural site far quicker than any road vehicle could

have managed. It was undoubtedly their skills that saved Ian's life so we wanted to give something back, especially as they do not receive any government funding or Lottery funding".

Well over 100 visitors enjoyed a delicious home-made cream tea and cakes, plus a garden treasure trail, tombola, plant sale and guess the distance to the scarecrow competition. The air ambulance also had a stall run by their volunteers, all of which contributed to help raise over £1,000 towards the fund.

More conifers to be removed from Ruttersleigh Common

IN 2007 a substantial area of conifer was harvested from Staple Common and Ruttersleigh to make way for a more diverse landscape of open pasture, heath and scrub, which is now summer-grazed by longhorn cattle.

This work was driven in part by the fact that Ruttersleigh is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and the wildlife species for which it is designated were declining due to the density and shade of the conifers, and the lack of open space.

Since that time cattle grazing and mechanical scrub control, plus the efforts of the Neroche Conservation volunteers, have succeeded in creating a diverse, wild and very rich landscape of open heath, wet flushes, chalky grassland, banks of scrub, open parkland trees, and denser woodland.

The site is now managed in a partnership between the Blackdown Hills Trust and the Forestry Commission, and grazing is undertaken by John Binnie at Ruttersleigh Farm.

The full expression of Ruttersleigh's potential habitats will take

a few more years longer to be achieved, but the progress is heartening.

However, not all the conifers which occupy the SSSI were removed in 2007, for practical reasons.

Now, after a re-assessment over the last few months, the Forestry Commission has decided that more conifer can realistically be removed, thereby providing more room in the future for open habitats of marshy heathland and chalky grassland.

This additional harvesting is more remote, and on more difficult ground, and is therefore technically more challenging.

Because of the inherently wet ground conditions on this site, harvesting has to happen at the driest time of year, and therefore the works will be starting this month.

Harvesting machinery will be accessing the site from the double-gated entrance into Staple Common on the road above Staple Fitzpaine, continuing a short distance along the Herepath, and then creating an access route off the forest road and down the slope into the valley.

Most clearfelling work will be focussed on the far western, lowest end of Ruttersleigh Common, but in addition there will be some thinning of larch and spruce in the central areas of Staple Common.

Works will last well into the autumn, and though it will not be necessary to close the bridleway, at times the forest road will be difficult to pass over due to machinery movements.

The original conifer harvesting caused concern for some local people. This time the work is on a far smaller scale, and its visual impact will be limited, but there will be noise and disruption at times.

The Forestry Commission is keen to assure the public that the work is being done in order to improve the quality of habitats on this site in the future.

If you use Staple Common to ride or walk, please be vigilant, and follow instructions on safety signage.

If you have concerns or questions, the Blackdown Hills AONB team will be happy to pass these on to the appropriate staff at the Forestry Commission.

SLEEPING WELL?



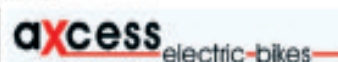
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A great day out

■ **COLOURFUL:** Face painting was only one of many activities on offer

THE early years children at St. Andrew's School in Chardstock enjoyed their annual summer visit to Pecorama. Accompanied by all the staff and many helpful parents, the children had a great day out, enjoying the sunshine and play opportunities at Pecorama.

School administrator Mandy Slingsby said: "The most rewarding was probably the miniature train ride."

"The children spent the next morning drawing fantastic pictures of their experiences during the outing."

A special thank you to the friends of the school who funded the cost of the coach."

Who's afraid of Shakespeare? Not us!



■ **GUY Susevee as Malvolio**

Photos by Jane Barribal



■ **ELLIS Baker as Sir Toby with Feste, played by Kirsten Hawkins**

AFRAID of Shakespeare? Not Awliscombe C of E Primary School who have just produced a fantastic musical version of the play "Twelfth Night" in the village hall.

The story goes ... that once upon a Twelfth Night, there was a dramatic shipwreck and identical twins, Sebastian and Viola, both survive but neither knows the other is still alive.

By differing means, they both end up at Count Orsino's court where scenes of romance, intrigue, trickery and great confusion take place.

Viola, who chose to disguise herself as a man, was played with skill and poise by Julia Thwaites. She also sang a number of songs that were delivered with finesse. Countess Olivia (played serenely by Isabel Sutcliffe) attracted the attentions of Count Orsino, played very effectively by Owen Barribal. Unfortunately, his romantic persuasions came to no avail.

Sir Toby Belch, Olivia's uncle was a bubbly character and Ellis Baker did extremely well to bring energy to this part.

This energy was matched by Feste, Olivia's Jester, played by Kirsten Hawkins, who bounced into and around the stage with style.

Guy Susevee played the part of Malvolio, Olivia's miserable servant, and successfully reflected his character.

This was an ambitious challenge for such a small school to attempt but the quality of acting and singing was very evident.

Congratulations to all the children involved for delivering such a fine performance. The director (headteacher Mrs Smith), assistant director (Miss Lee), musical director (Mrs Salter) and costume co-ordinator (Mrs Thwaites) can be very proud of what has been achieved.

Pupils stage their own coronation

CHILDREN at Offwell C of E Primary School took part in their own coronation event as King Thomas and Queen Niamh were crowned at St Mary's Church.

Having thoroughly enjoyed last year's jubilee celebrations, children in Oak class realised the actual coronation took place in 1953 and decided to research and plan their own event in celebration of the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty's Coronation.

The children found out about and explained the symbolism behind the orb, sceptre, swords of state and why they and the King James Bible were used in the ceremony.

They made their own replica crown jewels and asked the local vicar, the Reverend Peter Walker to step in to play the role of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Children throughout the school were invited to dress as either a monarch or a VIP guest for the coronation event and each

class processed from the school, past a welcome party bearing the crown jewels and into the church to the sound of orchestral music used at the actual coronation.

The king and queen were guided to the school's own St Edward's Chairs, presented to the people and they swore to uphold oaths the children had written for them.

The events of the coronation were explained as children guided parents, friends and their peers to understand the reasons for the various parts of the service. There was a 21-gun salute and dignitaries from each class were presented to the monarchs once they had been crowned.

The service ended with prayers for our Queen, country and world and the national anthem. Children and families returned to the meadow where the PTA presented rosettes to children to congratulate them for their superb crowns and

Cotleigh fete success

COTLEIGH'S annual fete and challenge welcomed families for a day of fun in the sun.

The event kicked off with the ever-famous Cotleigh Challenge, alongside the yearly skittles challenge and barbecue, with captain, Matthew Broom and his team 'the defending champions' coming out top.

Meanwhile, the main fete was also deemed a great success, packed full of activities from cakes and ice creams, to face painting and nail art, plants, produce and crafts.

Entertainment came in the form of a magician and a DJ, whilst younger visitors made use of a bouncy castle and traditional fair games like a crockery smash, coconut shy and slippery pole.

The flower show featured a large number of floral arrangements and fresh locally grown produce. Sophie George came away with the Doug Lane Cup and the Larcombe Cup for her flowers, produce and cookery; presented by Pam Lane.

The Cotleigh sections winners were Barbara Marsh and Ann Saunders for their photography and handmade items. The children's section showed the talent and creativity of the younger generation with first prize going to James Dunn, second to Ella George and third to Neave George and Lucy Wood.

There were several other competitions running like 'Name the Teddy' which was won by Bonita Oliver who named the Bear 'Charlie'. The envelope competition was won by Ann Coombe and Sarah Broom who picked the lucky envelopes containing the money.

The Aunt Sally competition was won by James Dunn for the under 14's and by Josh Edwards for the over 14s. Eventually the skittles competition came to an end and the winners were Richard Patch, Sally Solle and Aidan Jones.

Gillian Broom, chair of the Cotleigh fete committee said: "The flower show was full of beautiful colours and arrangement from the gardens of the community and the vegetable show was full of hard competition and wonderful produce."

"The cookery show had amazing creations throughout the competition which showed the skill of the parish."

"The Cotleigh section presented the real beauty of Cotleigh and the people within it." "A big thank you to not only those who attended but to those who spent their time helping before, during and after the event as it would not be so successful without all the contributions from the local community and from other parishes."

"Also, a big thank you to Dennis Retter for the use of his field for a car park for the afternoon."

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Blackdowns clubs and societies

BISHOPSWOOD

LADIES
FOLLOWING Pat Perryman's talk earlier in the year Bishopswood Ladies visited Honiton Lace Museum where Pat and a colleague gave a very informative guided tour of the exhibits.

One display showed lengths of lace, the oldest dating from the 17th century, which were almost unbelievable in the intricate nature of the work. Thousands of hours from dozens of workers had gone into the making of these, one of which consisted of butterflies, plants and birds all linked by an intricate mesh of hand stitching. The earliest lace was made from linen, but as soon as cotton was imported into England, this took over as the thread of choice. In earlier centuries lace was worn to display wealth,



displays since superseded by such items as Porsche cars and Rolex watches! A second room displayed lace used in various items of clothing, including wedding veils and babies' christening robes. An elegant dress worn by Wallis Simpson was displayed, coral red with cream lace panels, and also examples of rare black lace, worn by Victorian ladies when Queen Victoria made mourning fashionable. The whole museum was a monument to the industry and skill shown by past generations of women in the making of such beautiful lace.

Next month Bishopswood Ladies will again be out and about, this time with a trip to Bath and the American Museum.

HEMYOCK WI

SUMPTUOUS, luxurious, finest cuisine – no change there then for Sampford Arundel W.I. But at their last meeting it also described the Savoy Hotel, where their speaker, Eric Beckley had worked for twelve years as a manager. The hotel had started as a Palace for Peter of Savoie, uncle to the wife of Henry III. It was described then as 'the fairest Manor of England' and was rented for the sum of three barbed arrows. It was visited by many historical and celebratory figures over the centuries, from Watt Tylor to the present Queen (for whom a red carpet is laid for her entrance, not when she departs).

Eric told of his work in the present building, and how the management, running and ownership had radically changed in relatively recent years (they saved money by



cutting the bath towels in half!) It had been a good time for him, though sad in many ways.

Members of Hemyock Ladies' group had joined the W.I. so cakes and goodies were available (of Savoy standard, of course) Happy past events were discussed including the painting and craft'n'laugh days; visits to 'Annie Get Your Gun' and Hinkley Point. Highlight was the lunch for the Devon W.I.

Members were reminded about the Willow walk, Malvern Flower Show, cream tea and lunch.



■ FROM THE SAME HYMN SHEET: Edward Jacobs and Axe Valley Community Choir

Dalwood music day success

by Tina Mackenney

VISITORS to Dalwood on Saturday July 6th, you would have been amazed and delighted by the talent of local musicians and singers appearing at the second Dalwood Music Festival.

The day started with the Arcadia Jazzband playing in the village hall and from then on there was continuous music in St. Peter's Church, the Tucker's Arms and the village hall.

One of the highlights was the performance by the children's orchestra of St. Mary's Primary School in Axminster under the direction of violinist and pianist, Rachel Burrough.

The perfect sunny weather brought the music-lovers to the village. It was a very relaxed and happy occasion and congratulations and thanks must be given to all the wonderful musicians and singers and to the great team of stewards and helpers who worked so hard on the day.

Riding adventures in Clayhidon

AUTHOR, adventurer and photographer Tracey Elliot-Reep will be presenting stories and a slide show of her riding adventures in Mexico, Canada, southern Europe, New Zealand and southern Ireland at Clayhidon Parish Hall.

The event takes place on Saturday, September 14th, admission is free and light

refreshments will be available.

On Sunday September 15th there will be a service and ride out from St Andrew's Church in Clayhidon at 2.30pm.

For more information contact Maurice on 01823 680 665 or email maureen.maurice@virgin.net.

Email your WI or club reports to lisa@pemedial.co.uk for inclusion in the View From the Blackdown Hills

Are you happy with your broadband speed?

A report released by The National Audit Office is highly critical of the Department for Culture Media and Sport and its handling of the process to roll out broadband to rural areas.

In polling carried out by ComRes on behalf of the Countryside Alliance it was revealed that the majority of people living in the countryside think the Government's efforts to bring broadband to rural areas have been poor.

Most rural dwellers (53 per cent) rate the Government's efforts to roll out broadband into rural areas as "poor", compared with only a quarter (26 per cent) rating progress as "good".

Nearly three in 10 (29 per cent) rural dwellers are dissatisfied with the speed of their broadband connection, compared with only 18 per cent of urban dwellers.

Countryside Alliance executive chairman Barney White-Spunner said: "For a long time we have known this strategy is not making the inroads it needs to make to ensure that the UK has the best superfast broadband network in Europe by 2015. We now know that only nine of 44 broadband projects are projected to reach their 90 per cent superfast coverage target by May 2015 and that in June the target deadline

was extended to March 2017 – the project will be nearly two years late."

A recent Freedom of Information request by the Countryside Alliance has shown that councils have struggled to gain public sector funding and the majority of match funding has now come from LAs and not the private sector (see attached spreadsheet).

"The UK needs an internet infrastructure that can meet the demands of a modern digital society and it is now time for DCMS to ensure that rural communities are included as part of the national infrastructure," added Sir Barney.



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Working our Woodlands

with John Greenshields

WELL the Woodland fair was a great success, and the weather was great or maybe a bit too hot!

We have had some tremendous feed back, and people asking if we could do it twice a year! It does take a fair bit of organisation and we could not do it without all the people who helped, not least the volunteers.

And, of course, there was the clear up after, which takes a few days. I must thank all who came for their tidiness, we only picked a couple of bits of rubbish, and even they may have come from an over-filled bin.

During this dry weather its important to water young trees that were planted last autumn and spring, as they will not have put down a good root system yet. Even some trees planted two years ago may be struggling. When a tree is under stress it's the top leaves that show signs of dying back first.

The Woodland Association are running three courses this autumn, the first is on August 22nd and is a living tree grading course. This is to help tree owners to know the value of their standing trees. The course also touches on grading sawn timber, diseases and visual inspections.

The second on September 24th is the ever popular horse logging course, with proper hands on experience.

The third is on October 22nd, a woodland management course, to

help the small woodland owner, and includes advice on grants. More information on the web site www.woodbiz.co.uk.

It's coming up to the time when we in the industry start felling, (end of August). The reason we don't fell in the spring or summer

is because of nesting birds and other wildlife that may be disturbed.

Last year only approx 50 per cent of the felling and abstraction was carried out due to the very wet conditions, the result of work such as this always looks bad but it is a necessity.

Without thinning the trees left would not naturally evolve to their natural form, and the result of more light being allowed in brings on the regeneration of young trees and other plants. This also is of great benefit to all other wildlife as it allows light and young growth within the woodland. An unmanaged woodland is a dark and miserable place!

When I was a boy we were taught all about animals and the British countryside.

I help with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, which entails taking teenagers out into the woods and showing them wildlife, flora and fauna.

I am always amazed at their total lack of knowledge through no fault of their own. I am also amazed at their enthusiasm to learn.

The other day I had four boys and girls with me. I got them in a hide and I managed to call a roe buck to within a few metres of us, they all took photos and sent them around their friends, and apparently "I is awesome!"

My usual contacts are 01823660764 parkfarm@tinyonline.co.uk



WATER young trees



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Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding

From our chairman

Over the past year we've looked both forward and back as we celebrated the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty's rich heritage and invested in the area's future.

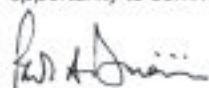
I was delighted to welcome more than 300 people to the Blackdown Hills Heritage Day in September. There were events across the area with opportunities to explore thousands of years of human history from the Iron Age onwards.

Many local people, schoolchildren and American veterans were also involved in Dunkeswell War Stories, a project which produced a fascinating archive of interviews and multi-media learning resources to help new generations learn about the Second World War.

Looking ahead, the team developed Blackdown Hills Natural Futures a major new project which, if our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund is successful, will start in autumn 2014. It will help to discover more about the nature of the Blackdown Hills, with plenty of ways for everyone to get involved, including support for communities who want to help nature 'on their doorstep'.

Other work this year has also involved planning for the future. We were closely involved in planning and licencing issues surrounding a number of high-profile proposals, including large-scale, solar PV farms and music festivals. And we worked to foster new relationships such as the Devon and Somerset Local Nature Partnerships and Force for Nature - our first joint initiative with the Blackdown Hills Trust, a recently established local charity.

We also began work on the AONB's new Management Plan for 2014 - 19. This vital document guides the work of the AONB partnership for the next five years, and so it is important that we have feedback from as many local people, organisations and parishes as possible. Many of you will have already helped us by responding to our questionnaire, but there will be another opportunity to comment on the draft plan in the autumn.



Paul Diviani
Chairman, Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership



The Blackdown Hills is one of the UK's 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – landscapes protected for the nation because of their exceptional countryside, heritage and wildlife.

Over 80 organisations work together to protect this special place.



Funding and finance

The work of the Blackdown Hills AONB team is funded by Defra, Devon and Somerset county councils, East Devon, Mid Devon and South Somerset district councils and Taunton Deane Borough Council. For details of income and expenditure for 2012-13, please see the annual review online.

Making it Local and Neroche

This year we have continued to support the Neroche scheme, and Making it Local grants fund. To find out about what these major projects have achieved in 2012 – 2013 go to:

www.makingitlocal.org

www.nerochescheme.org

Photo credits: Dan Bryan and Chris Goodman

Full annual review online:

www.blackdownhillsaonb.org.uk/Annual-review-2012-13.html

Natural Beauty – a review of 2012–13



Landscape

- We developed Dunkeswell War Stories with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and local sources. See www.dunkeswellwarstories.com
- We developed What Makes a View? as part of the European CORDIALE project, to enable local people to speak up for the views which matter to them.
- We worked with partners on a funding bid for Natural Futures, a major project to help communities to understand and cherish biodiversity and heritage on their doorsteps.
- We worked with English Heritage to train new volunteers to monitor historic monuments.
- We supported projects to monitor species, including the Somerset Environmental Record Centre's Big Bat Survey, and the RSPB's Blackdown Hills summer visitors bird survey.
- We worked with East Devon AONB to update our Strategic Nature Areas - an important tool in future planning to protect wildlife.
- We supported the Blackdown Hills community iron workings archaeology project in training volunteers and mapping key sites.



Sustainability

- We welcomed over 300 people to the Blackdown Hills Heritage Day to discover the AONB's rich history.
- We supported the formation of the Blackdown Hills Parish Network and the creation of a community website at www.blackdownhillsparishnetwork.co.uk.
- As part of Force for Nature (a Heritage Lottery Fund initiative with the Blackdown Hills Trust and the Forestry Commission) we created an online portal for countryside volunteering in the AONB and helped to create new opportunities.
- We supported the Devon Dance Compass project, involving local communities in high quality dance and a performance by members of the Royal Ballet.
- We were a partner in Beef, Butterflies and Trees, supporting farmers and woodland owners to manage land more sustainably, with the Forestry Commission and funded by Making it Local.
- We supported a local group action group in their efforts to create the first section of a multi-user trail along the old Culm Valley railway line.
- We supported a local photographer to document traditional Blackdown Hills barns and produce a high-quality book of her work.



Communication

- We worked with the Highways Authority and local communities to install three more road signs marking entry to the AONB.
- We carried out two surveys to gather input for the AONB's Management Plan 2014 - 2019, on which we have started review work.
- We designed and installed a high-quality interpretation board about Dumpdon Iron Age Hill Fort at the Otter Valley Ice Cream garden.
- We promoted over 100 countryside opportunities to enjoy and learn about the Blackdown Hills through our Countryside Events programme, and we continued to spread the word on social networks reaching over 1000 followers.

LeisureReview

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on 01297 35750

Blackdowns group to perform in Exeter Cathedral

BLACKDOWNS Early Music Projects (BEMP) has been bringing imaginative and much appreciated concerts of early music to the Blackdown Hills area for around 10 years.

These have included presentations by small vocal consort groups of just 12 voices, such as the highly acclaimed Renaissance programme *Ego sum qui sum* in September 2012, performed in North Curry and Culmstock churches (which attracted the attention of BBC Radio 3 and reviewed on the website *Seen and Heard International*), to much larger scale works such as the 2008 performance of the Monteverdi *Vespers of 1640* and *Biber F minor Requiem*, performed with 36 singers accompanied by a full ensemble of period instruments in Wellington Church.



MUSICAL DIRECTOR:
JanJoost van Elburg

BEMP's next concert is set to be a very high profile event in the UK's musical calendar. In Grand Baroque in Exeter Cathedral on Friday, August 30th, BEMP is presenting two UK premiere performances of large-scale central European baroque choral works – cathedral music in a cathedral space – together with an

impressive line-up of internationally renowned instrumentalists and vocalists.

The Dutch musical director JanJoost van Elburg is well known to the regular BEMP audiences, having been principal music director since 2004.

It will be his task to bring these dazzling works to life for the first time in the UK.

At his disposal will be the expertise of international vocal soloists (Sally Dunkley, Amy Haworth, Caroline Trevor, Hannah Cooke, Julian Stocker, Mark Dobell, Jonathan Arnold & Thomas Flint), from groups such as the Tallis Scholars, Taverner Consort, Gabrieli Consort, Hilliard Ensemble, Tenebrae, The Sixteen, Stile Antico and I Fagiolini.

The 8-part ripieno choir supporting the soloists comprises 30 regular members of BEMP, drawn together from all over the UK and Holland.

Accompanying the singers will be a virtuosic assemblage of instrumentalists. The concert will be another first as three instrumental groups are involved who have not worked together in a major project of this kind before.

The English Cornett & Sackbut Ensemble have joined forces with the Monteverdi String Band for many polychoral performances. Most fascinating is BEMP's addition of the recently formed Altenburg Ensemble, the only historical ensemble in the UK performing on 'real' natural trumpets.

This is a major move into authentic baroque performance as they will perform without the added 1960s vent holes (which make pitching easier, but at the cost of tone quality). In addition, there will be a team of continuo players including two chamber organs (played by Steven Devine and Steven Hollas) theorbo (Eligio Quinteiro) and violone (Peter McCarthy).



PLAYING ON 'NATURAL TRUMPETS': Altenburg Ensemble

On August 30th, each of the individual ensembles will contribute pieces from their own specialist repertoires from central Europe to provide rich support to the programme's choral works.

The bigger choral work is *Missa in Labore Requies* by Georg Muffat (1653-1704) – a cosmopolitan musician of French/Scottish parentage who spent the majority of his working life in German speaking countries. While the majority of Muffat's compositions are for keyboard and chamber ensembles, his sole surviving large scale choral work was written during his time in Salzburg, possibly for the enthronement of Archbishop Ernst in August 1687, employing the full range of baroque instrumentation to colourful effect.

The other UK premiere is the 1693 *Missa Sanctissimae Trinitatis* by Johann J. Fux (1660-1741), remembered as a fine composer and the author of a definitive treatise on Renaissance counterpoint used by Bach, Handel, Mozart and Beethoven which even today is a

mainstay of college curricula.

This work received its first modern day performance in Amsterdam last autumn when JanJoost van Elburg prepared it for performance by his Dutch choir *Lekkoor*. Fux wrote the work for Vienna Cathedral in the 1690s and although scored without trumpets, its writing for double choir, soloists, strings, winds and continuo is also truly spectacular.

BEMP's founders, Catherine and Geoffrey Bass, have organised early music workshops and concerts in Devon and Somerset for the past ten years. They are passionate about providing performances from the less well-known early music repertoire; certainly this stylish presentation in Exeter Cathedral at 7.30 on Friday 30th August will be one not to miss.

Tickets (£10 - £25) are on sale online at www.blackdownearlymusic.co.uk, or from Exeter Phoenix Theatre (01392 667080), Exeter Northcott Theatre (01392 493493), Exeter Tourist Information (0392 265700) and Taunton Tourist Information (01392 336344).



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E: info@bhba.org.uk or T: 01823 681484 www.bhba.org.uk.**

Surprise appearance by Canadian singer

AN international award-winning singer songwriter, from Canada, swapped the big stage in London for an intimate performance at Stockland Village Hall for an impromptu gig.

Ian Sherwood enjoyed a whirlwind visit to the Blackdown Hills thanks to Stocklander Wendy Van Der Plancke, who saw him perform at a conference and asked if he would like to perform in the village.

Wendy said: "I saw Ian perform at a conference and he was just brilliant, he had everyone up on their feet. I happened to ask him where he was performing next and he said his next gig in London had just fallen through, so I said 'fancy coming to Stockland?'"



SURPRISE VISIT: Ian Sherwood

And he said yes. I was the envy of the entire conference."

Ian, who was named Best Male Artist at the International Acoustic Music Awards last year,

made the special trip to Stockland last month for his last minute performance. But he was not able to enjoy the Devon countryside for long, as he had to hotfoot it back to

London after the gig to catch a flight back to Nova Scotia.

Money raised from ticket sales will go to Stockland Village Hall funds.

Evolver exhibition at Thelma Hulbert

THELMA Hulbert Gallery in Honiton is hosting the prestigious Evolver Prize 2013.

Artists, photographers and designers compete for the prize of £500 and having their work featured on the front cover of the July/August edition of Evolver, the Wessex Arts and

Culture guide. The exhibition at the gallery until August 31st comprises the winning Evolver cover and 49 runners up. There is a broad spectrum of cover artworks in different media, all of which are for sale. Visitors are also encouraged to vote for their favourite

cover and can agree/disagree the judging panel.

Running alongside this exhibition, in the gallery's project space, there is a display of Evolver covers created by pupils from the Mill Water School, in Honiton.

LeisureReview

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Skills Unearthed - The art of the Blackdowns

A NEW major exhibition offers a unique opportunity to find out about the Blackdown Hills Artists and Makers as they stage an ambitious exhibition.

The exhibition at the Tithe Barn, Cotley, from September 14th to October 6th will present new work by the contemporary artists working in a range of media. People familiar with the Blackdown Hills will recognise themes and motifs unique to the area.

The exhibition marks the finale of a very successful two year project, inspired by the industry and crafts of the Blackdown Hills, both past and present entitled Skills Unearthed.

An events programme of workshops and talks for everyone will run alongside the exhibition.

The exhibition is open Thursday to Sunday 11am to 5pm and will form part of Somerset Arts Week.

Artists exhibiting include:

Carly Batchelor - photography

Shot in the USA, Carly Batchelor's photographs explore the influence of WW2 on the Blackdown Hills, with expanded portraits of people who were involved in the war and those linked to the airfields. The work explores contemporary portraiture, archive images from the war years and first hand accounts.



Ruth Bell - dance

Ruth Bell uses dance and film to explore Dunkeswell, a location steeped in history. Bell will be interviewing



people who remember the dances at the airfields during WW2 along with current skydivers and pilots. Bell will create a film which will merge the present and past, bringing life to the stories and memories.

Louise Cotley - woven textiles

Louise Cotley is fascinated by the legacy of pre-industrial hand weaving the the Blackdown Hills. She will be hand weaving a length of 'kersey' (a beautiful thick woollen cloth from 18th century Devon). The Kersey fabric will be photographed in the landscape at locations connected to the ancient textile industry. The work will be supported by an open public weaving workshop in Stockland.



Jon England - painting/film

Jon England will further his investigations of the Blackdown Hills' World War Two airesites particularly focusing on the medics of the 101st Airborne (recently made famous by the HBO series Band of Brothers, who departed Upottery for the D-Day invasion). Jon, working with iodine as a painting medium, will create transient paintings, captured through time-lapse film, that fade to a faint trace.



Sarah Hitchens - ceramics

Sarah Hitchens will produce new ceramic work directly inspired by local businesses in the Blackdown Hills,

which showcase it as a very special place, engendering pride within our community, whilst presenting our uniqueness to the world beyond our boundaries.



Tim Martin - installation, film, drawing

Tim Martin aims to explore 'A Slice of the Blackdowns' which will take the longest slice - by distance - across the hills. He will walk it, document it, dividing it up into segments, study the geology, talk to those who work on it, look into its history and then produce a work from his explorations.



Bryony Tidball - sculpture

Bryony Tidball proposes to make a large sculpture from straw, influenced by the corn dolly. She says of this work: "Through the size of the work, I want people to feel overwhelmed, to realise the expanse and unrelenting force of nature. Feel a connection the the people who once worked in the fields in the Blackdown Hills; to realise their vulnerability in the face of the rural landscape."



Andre Wallace - sculpture

Andre Wallace will use images and archival photographs of church imagery in the Blackdown Hills to create a three-dimensional work. In making this new work he will employ and reference past techniques and crafts with present day industrial practices used in the Blackdown Hills.



Gillian Widden - sculpture

Gillian Widden's work is inspired by the 'hooked' teasel *Dipsacus sativus*, a sub species of ful-lonum. The teasel which was cultivated for used in the milling industry, plays an important role in Somerset's agricultural history. Using charred hazel poles, and a combination of natural and dyed hedgerow teasels Gillian plans to create a sculpture that refers to the stacks used for teasel drying.



Catherine Bass - music

Blackdown Early Music projects discover, transcribe and perform early music (pre 1720). A Blackdown Hills organisation with an international reputation, BEMP is inspired by bringing world class musicians and singers to the Blackdown Hills.



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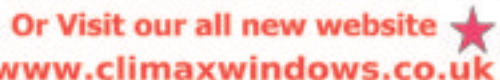


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